



Fritz Eichenberg

WOMEN'S ISSUE

via pacis

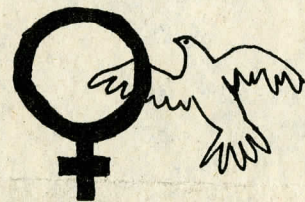
(the way of peace)
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WOMEN AND PEACE

In October of 1953 I was born into the nuclear age. As far back as I remember, the threat of annihilation by nuclear war existed. When I was ten, I remember asking my older sister to read the book of Revelation to me. Wide-eyed I would ask questions and then conclude that God was telling us about that war. I certainly didn't have the maturity then to understand what this all meant but the whole thing then consumed my thoughts.

As I grew up, I began to get used to the idea of living in a nuclear world. After all there was nothing we could do about it anyway. And I was just as content to forget this technological guillotine that hung over our heads. It wasn't pleasant to think of and I had more important things to worry about. So I went on with my life.

In 1975, I met some people who were asking challenging questions about nuclear war. I started to think about it again.



I grew up in a "man's world". When I was making my first communion, I wondered why I couldn't be an altar boy. And why when the girls were always the smartest in the class there were so few women that had power in our society.

In adolescence, I learned just because I was female, I was a potential victim of rape. It was a "man's world" and I felt like there was something unfair about the way things were but there again "was nothing I could do about it anyway." So I learned not to question it and began to get comfortable with the security of the way things were.

Now I am beginning to awaken as a woman; to recognize that I have a unique identity and history that I was never aware of. And now I am asking questions of the things I grew up accepting.

I have become committed to working for peace and am beginning to struggle with what it means to put these two experiences together; what it means to work for peace as a woman. It is clear now to me that sexism is the root of the American violence machine. I am seeing the exploitation done by a patriarchal culture that upholds a warped idea of competition, aggression and acquisition of that never-ending "more". The collective symbol of the battered women that we house at the Catholic Worker is that nuclear war is even thinkable.

I am struggling with a feminist analysis of peacemaking and plan to write more on this in future newsletters. This month's issue is an attempt by our community to begin this perspective and to encourage women to ask deeper questions of themselves and the patriarchal order of our lives.

Discussions

Part of the Catholic Worker tradition is the round table discussion, where people join together to verbalize and clarify thoughts. The liturgy is celebrated nearly every Friday night at the house (713 Indiana, one block north of University) at 8 p.m., followed by a discussion.

Nov. 10: No discussion. Community members will be attending a gathering of the Midwest Catholic Worker Communities near Davenport.

Nov. 17: The Permanent Diaconate; the Sullivans. A new emphasis has been put on the role of the deacon in today's Catholic church. Tonight's discussion will be lead by a married deacon and his spouse on this form of a lay ministry.

Nov. 24: The Eastern Rite Church; Richard Cleaver. A two year veteran of St. Joseph's Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in New York City, Richard is well versed in the eastern contributions to contemporary christianity.

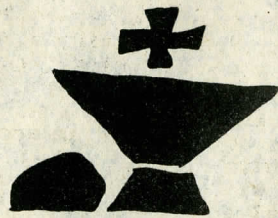
Dec. 1: Fallout--Rural needs and the Arms Race; Jerry McMahon. Jerry is a staff member of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and an activist against nuclear weapons and nuclear power. The discussion this evening will center on the effect of nuclear weapons on rural areas.

Dec. 8: The Women's Ordination Conference; members of the Diocesan Task Force of Justice for Women in the Church. Members of the Task Force attended this conference in November and will report on its actions. On this day, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the mass will be pre-empted by a para-liturgical celebration lead by women.

Dec. 15: The Catholic Worker and the Future of the Church; Bishop Dingman and staff. Bishop Dingman is a loyal supporter of our community. He will lead a discussion on how the Worker is fitting into forefronts in the Church.

Berrigan to speak Dec. 11

December 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Dowling High School Daniel Berrigan will be playing himself in a Reader's Theatre production of "Catonsville Nine". He will also speak on nuclear resistance following the play. Money raised will go to the Catholic Worker House.



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ON HOSPITALITY

by Frank Cordaro

We are down to two staff people living in our houses, Jacque Dickey and myself. Joe Da Via has decided to move outside of the houses and live with some friends of the Worker. His energies will be in finding a job and meeting his personal needs. Joe has been with us since we began. As long as he is in Des Moines, he will always help--once a Catholic Worker, always a Catholic Worker, at least with Joe. Betty Goodnough is still helping out. She lives in her own apartment, but has not been able to help much lately as she caught a flu bug that the doctors say may take three months to recover from. Tony Caldiero, originally from Casa Maria in Milwaukee, spent September and part of October with us but has moved on. He was a great help during the remodeling of the Catholic Worker House and came just in time to fix the brakes on the van. Steve Marsden is still with us, though we saw more of him before he decided to move in with us in February than we do now. Steve was arrested at a nuclear power plant last month. For those of you who haven't met him, Steve is the closest thing to a Methodist St. Francis with a political activist leaning that we have ever seen. We are truly fortunate to have him with us whenever he gets back home.

At this time we have one house open for hospitality and are moving at a snail's pace to get the Msgr. Ligutti House reopened. I am working one day a week with a senior

citizens' organization and Jacque is thinking about getting a job or working more for the Mobilization for Survival. She was the main organizer for the women's action here when Rosalyn Carter came to central Iowa. Needless to say, we are down to as low a level of staff energy as we have ever been. We really could use a couple more full time people. I don't know why people aren't knocking down our doors to live here. Five dollars a week allowance and all the beans you can eat. You work like hell for heaven. What more do folks want?

All times have their blessings. This is no exception. Our doors are open; we are offering hospitality--limited--yet all hospitality is limited. Growth in radical love has no measuring stick. Thank God we have not institutionalized the Catholic Worker's works of mercy to the point of programming in the needed staff personnel from a central office. As it is, we are an anarchist movement completely dependent on individuals. The Catholic Worker is alive and well in Jacque and I and all our friends outside the house. Our doors are open for hospitality and we are doing what we can. The real blessings of these times is that we are getting to develop a much underdeveloped virtue of patience. We feel that there is so much more that we can be doing, but God is telling us we are doing all we need to do for now. A lesson we activists need to take to heart more often.

Remembering Karen

Karen Silkwood was an unknown person before November 13, 1974, when her Honda civic went off the side of an Oklahoma highway, killing her instantly. Why did her death make her a national figure?

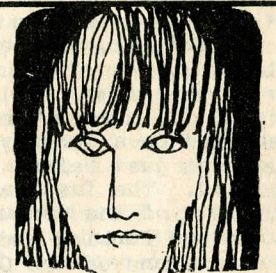
Karen was a 28 year old worker in the Kerr-McGee plutonium processing plant in Oklahoma. The company made plutonium fuel rods for the government's "fast-breeder" nuclear plant program. Plutonium is the deadly, cancer-causing raw material of atom bombs.

Kerr-McGee continuously disregarded minimum safety precautions and for a few years workers were never told the carcinogenic effects of inhaling plutonium dust, a common accident at the plant. Karen was shocked to learn this because she herself had been contaminated. She was elected to the steering committee of the local Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union and in the fall began collecting evidence of the plant's violations. At the union's request she compiled proof that Kerr-McGee was falsifying quality checks to pass defective fuel rods. Faulty fuel rods could cause an accident at an atomic power plant.

This information was with her en route to meeting a union official and a reporter for the New York Times the night her car went off the road. Kerr-McGee officials were at the wreck twice after the accident. Her papers all "disappeared". The mystery of her death, the missing papers, and the fact that her apartment--namely the bologna and cheese in her refrigerator--was contaminated with plutonium the week before the accident, all point to foul play. Obviously, the story is incomplete.

Karen Silkwood's story must be fully told. Yet, two congressional investigations into

KERR-McGEE
1946-1974



the events surrounding her death were cancelled almost before they began. The National Organization of Women and other groups have pressed for full disclosure. Her parents have sued Kerr-McGee officials for conspiring to violate her civil rights and have sued FBI officials for conducting a cover-up.

What is needed is a grass-roots movement demanding answers to questions that this case raises. If the Karen Silkwood investigations can be reopened we can find those answers and in the process learn a great deal about the way the nuclear industry operates.

-----SUPPORTERS OF SILKWOOD 317 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E. Washington, D.C. 20003

Monday, November 13 begins commemoration of Karen Silkwood Week. Demonstrations have been planned to coincide with this week all over the country. The Iowa Mobilization for Survival plans an action on Saturday, November 18 at the Duane Arnold Energy Plant (Iowa's only nuclear plant) in Palo, near Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Currently the plant is shut down due to cracks in one of the systems close to the reactor core. Plans are to assemble at the plant site at noon on Saturday to be ready to move in an auto cavalcade to the Iowa Electric headquarters in downtown Cedar Rapids, in the southeast section. For more information contact the CURE office in Des Moines at 277-0253.

Women and the Peace Message

by Eileen Egan

"Women of the entire universe...you to whom life is entrusted at this grave moment in history, it is for you to save the peace of the world."

This was the concluding sentence of a message to women, one of the closing messages of the Second Vatican Council, spoken on December 8th, 1965. Just the day before, on December 7th, a crucial document, "The Church in the Modern World," had been accepted by little more than the required two-thirds vote. The peace message of the Council was contained in this document, including an assertion of the right of conscientious objection to war, the consonance of nonviolence with Gospel teaching and the condemnation of indiscriminate warfare as "a crime against God and man." This condemnation constituted the one ban of the entire Council, a contrast to earlier Church Councils which were heavily concerned with bans and anathemas.

Women had not been permitted to speak at the Council, even on the subject of saving the peace of the world. Laymen, however, were allowed for the first time to speak to the assembled Fathers of the Church.

There had been a peace lobby at the Council, a lobby which was intensified at the last of the four sessions when the war/peace issue was debated and voted upon. The women who took part in this lobby worked and fasted in the shadows. As a member of that lobby, I joined other members of PAX, a Catholic peace group, in going from bishop to bishop, from cardinal to cardinal, with a draft of a peace statement.

It was at that time, in the fall of 1965, that a group of nineteen women from five countries, embarked on a ten-day fast in Rome's Cenacle Convent just before the peace issue was introduced. The fast was organized by Lanza del Vasto of the Community of the Ark in France. He had lobbied and fasted for peace at earlier sessions of the Council, and his wife, Chanterelle, was one of the fasters. Dorothy Day was also among the fasters. The communal fast was not a protest, but a way of "entreating the Lord to inspire the Council Fathers with the evangelical solution for which the world is waiting." The group statement adverted to the Sermon on the Mount as "not only a way to personal perfection but also a power capable of transforming institutions and giving a new meaning to history."

These women were particularly moved by the appeal in the Message to Women cited above: "Reconcile men with life and above all, we entreat you, watch carefully over the future of our race. Hold back the hand of man who, in a moment of madness, might attempt to destroy human civilization."

A decade later, when Pope Paul opened the Holy Year of Reconciliation, he reiterated the call to women to take on the burdens of peacemaking and reconciliation. But, Catholic women who wish to contribute actively to peacemaking and reconciliation and to offer alternatives to the philosophic and thought systems that support violence and warfare, are forced to an inescapable but realistic conclusion. If society at large treated them in the same manner as the ecclesiastical society of the Catholic Church, their effectiveness in saving the



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peace of the world would be minimal. The Vatican is a bastion of maleness. (When the American humorist Will Rogers toured the Vatican and viewed its treasures, he was asked for his reaction. It came in a laconic comment, "It lacks the woman's touch.")

Vatican City, the 108-acre state within the confines of Rome, is not Mount Athos, the orthodox monastery where all females (even female animals) are excluded. However, women are allowed to Vatican City only by the service entrance. Religious Sisters are noticeably present in the charity storerooms, in the charity clinic and in various housekeeping and service tasks. When, however, a woman was named as a member of a diplomatic mission to the Holy See, she was refused accreditation simply because of her sex. Despite protests by Catholic women's groups, the 1968 ban on the presence of Dr. Elizabeth Muller as member

of Jesus

of the mission from the Federal Republic of Germany was never lifted. No explanation was offered by the Vatican, though one cleric pointed out that Dr. Muller would be called upon to attend evening meetings with high personages of the Vatican. This break with tradition was somehow unacceptable. Do we see here the age-old stereo-type of the woman as temptress, as a source of evil, as somehow defiling and polluting as, in fact, Eve?

The Muller case attracted world attention to the anachronism of a woman-free Vatican. Publicity had its effect. Within five years a woman was accepted as representative of her country to the Holy See. When Bernadette Olowo presented her credentials from the government of Uganda, she was quietly accepted. She is the first woman to be listed as a diplomatic representative in the *Annuario Pontificio*—no small breakthrough in a church still covertly nourished by subterranean springs from the old "misbegotten male" tradition.

St. Thomas Aquinas in his day echoed St. Augustine, who had simply echoed the defective biology of Aristotle in calling women a "misbegotten or castrated male." To St. Thomas, woman was made exclusively for procreation and "she was not fitted to help man except in generation, because another man would have proved a more effective help in anything else." A deep undercurrent of fear of woman flows through the thinking of many early Church Fathers, surfacing in such famous attacks as that of Tertullian, "You are the devil's gateway...you are the first deserter of the divine law." St. Jerome, outside for his admiration for learned virgins and ascetic widows, fulminated against women as sensual objects who are the downfall of man.

The Vatican, as a mini-state and as the central body of the Catholic Church, mirrors the negative stereotype of woman to which the whole Christian community is heir. Yet, from the Vatican comes the call for women to become "the creators of reconciliation in families and in society."

Certainly, peace is the over-arching need of our nuclear-fragile age and if Catholic women are called to be reconcilers and peacemakers, let us accept the call with deadly, perhaps we should say, living seriousness. We should address ourselves to a great lack, a yawning chasm, in church teaching, namely a unified teaching on peace.

History of the Just War

Just war theology, which has dominated Christian thinking since the Fifth Century, is a totally male construct. Like much theology, it makes use of abstractions. In this case, the abstractions are several conditions which a war must meet to make it a just war and thus "justify" the killing of human beings. These conditions are found nowhere in the gospels, nor do they appear in the teaching of the Fathers of the infant Christian Church. We know that during the first four centuries Christians were noted for their refusal to form a part of a killing army. The simple "non-decet" of St. Marcellus describes the attitude of a soldier in the Roman army who realized the chasm between Christianity and soldiery. "It is not fitting," Marcellus said, as he set aside the uniform and weapons of the Roman army. Like many other Christian conscientious objectors, Marcellus died by the sword for giving up the sword.

The change in thinking regarding participation in the military came about during the Constantinian period of the Roman empire. St. Augustine of Hippo searched for a way to enroll Christians in the defense of an empire which had ceased its persecution of Christians and now was menaced from without by the marauders from the north. The Roman Empire provided the sinews of order and social peace which allowed for the growth of such green shoots of fresh thinking and life style as Christianity.

St. Augustine never deviated from the gospel nonviolence of the early Christians with regard to personal conduct. A Christian put upon by an unjust attacker must prefer death to slaying an attacker. However, Augustine found a rationale for Christians to kill in war in the work of the good pagan, Cicero. In the treatise "On Duties", Cicero outlined the ethics of the "just war," stating that "no war is just unless it is entered upon after an official demand for satisfaction has been given and a formal declaration made."

Augustine built on Cicero and erected a just war theology that was clarified by Thomas Aquinas who reiterated the concept of killing for the defense of the commonweal. Meanwhile, one could not have recourse to the sword as a private person, nor should clerics be soldiers because "it is unbecoming for them to slay or shed blood and it is more fitting that they should be ready to shed their own blood for Christ, so as to imitate in deed what they portray in their ministry." Theologians in time rounded out the criteria for the just war to seven: a formal declaration, a just cause, right intention, last resort, right and proportionate means, and a reasonable expectation that the good achieved would outweigh the evil perpetrated.

Every criterion of the so-called just war must be met if the war is to be considered a just war.

Certainly the fidelity of theologians to the just war criteria indicates how and why they have merited the description "merchants of abstraction." Many such theologians were scholar-priests or professor-priests who were not subject to conscription, and therefore were far removed from the concrete necessities of waging war.

Toward A Theology of Peace

Women, I am convinced, tend to think in more concrete categories than men. Whether such a difference is innate or springs from life experiences (including care of children) and culture, is not the question here. The differences are there and they are important for the future of the world.

Women, who have seen their world destroyed by the war games of men over the centuries, know that only when the war is over and corpses piled high, is there a decision made as to which side was justified and which side was unjustified.

That the church is veering from the just war criteria became clear when Pope John XXIII, in his epochal "Pacem in Terris," never referred to them. He did say something revolutionary, something which brings us back to Gospel non-violence, when he announced, "The same moral law which governs the lives of individuals also governs political communities."

In this sentence, the chasm between personal, Christian morality and the morality

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of the obedient citizen in war—a chasm that had been opened by the Augustinian acceptance of Roman ethics—began to be healed.

The "just war" tradition, in effect displaced the Christian imperative of love from its centrality in Christian life. It permitted Christians to perpetrate, as citizen-soldiers, acts that would have been abhorrent to them as individuals. This is moral schizophrenia.

It is much easier for women to comprehend this since they have, for the most part, been on the sidelines of wars, picking up the broken bodies and the debris of their homes and lives. As Mahatma Gandhi pointed out, family life consists of the working out of the force of love in the reconciliation of differences.

"Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives," he wrote, "disappear before the exercise of this force... History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love... And, what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations."

Kropotkin, and many others, agree with Gandhi that history has been written to emphasize the role of power, competition, violence and war. Women know that there is another history, written from the bottom rather than from the top, and that is where most of their history is hidden.

It is in their hidden history that women have found ways to reconciliation in family and community disputes—disputes that were bitter and even murderous. It is their concrete experiences in keeping their own families alive that may keep the human family from extinction. But Catholic women will make a minimal contribution, even after the generous call of Pope Paul VI, unless they can play a role hitherto denied them, that of participating with men in developing the theology of a Church which includes one sixth of the world's people.

Woman's concrete approach to life and the living of the gospel might help develop what the world and the church desperately need, a theology of peace.

During the Vietnam years there was an unprecedented upsurge of Catholic peace activism, a period when the "just war" criteria were not applied by the teaching church until the war was six years old. Only then did the bishops declare that the evils being perpetrated in Vietnam outweighed the good to be achieved—thus declaring it to be unjust. In the nuclear age, when the vaporization of cities and their inhabitants can take place in minutes and hours, a six-year waiting period is hardly a response to our times and conditions. New responses from our theologians are likewise delayed.

Gospel Peacemaking

The quality of nurturing, generally attributed to women, the quality that has preserved life and peace in families and communities over the centuries, must now be applied to the human race. Catholic women, in responding to the papal plea that they be reconcilers in society, can initiate their contribution to a theology of peace not from the standpoint of dogmatic or moral theology, which has spawned so many abstract legalisms, but from what has been called ascetical theology, the highest counsels given by Jesus.

In the Gospel we learn from the mouth of Jesus how His followers are expected to

treat their opponents.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies.' But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who mistreat you so that you will become sons of your Father in Heaven."

In the same sermon, Jesus reiterates, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." The Sermon on the Mount gives the basis for gospel nonviolence in the "contradictions," where Jesus tells his followers to reject contemporary morality (contemporary to Jesus as it is to us) in refraining from an angry response, in letting go one's cloak to the one who would snatch one's coat, in going two miles with one who would force the first mile, as well as in loving the enemy. Those who base their nonviolence on these teachings of Jesus are often called "Sermon on the Mount" pacifists.

In my work for Catholic Relief Services, I saw how millions of lives had been destroyed in Europe by allied forces, as well as by axis forces.

It occurred to me that mercy, which is only love in response to need, is not only interrupted but reversed by war. Christians, who are called upon to love their opponents (and to perform for them the works of mercy—of feeding them when hungry and giving drink to them when thirsty—in wartime, go further than not feeding them or not giving them not to drink. In war, and particularly in modern war, the works of mercy are obscenely reversed. Food to the enemy is blockaded so that noncombatant civilians will starve (since soldiers have first call on food supplies). A great exploit in World War II was the destruction in a bombing raid of one of the the largest reservoirs in Europe. The aim was to cut off the supply of drinking water to the enemy community and was justified as a means of destroying the will to fight. The less active of the enemy population would of course be the worst sufferers, children, the ill, the aged, the blind.

How perilous a course it seems for Christians to take part in a war when we must reverse every work of mercy that we are called upon to perform for the neighbor in need. In the parable of the Last Judgement, we learn that whenever we meet the need of another, we are meeting Christ. He is always the "least of the brethren". The "least of the brethren" during wartime would be the person who is declared our enemy. There is an element of surprise in the Last Judgement parable when the question is posed "When did we see thee hungry... thirsty?" Could it be that the surprise that might await the Christian would be to find that the enemy who starved to death, who was obliterated with his city, napalmed with his village, cremated alive with countless non-combatants, is an accusing Christ? The works of mercy, as the opposite of the works of war, are the truest works of peace.

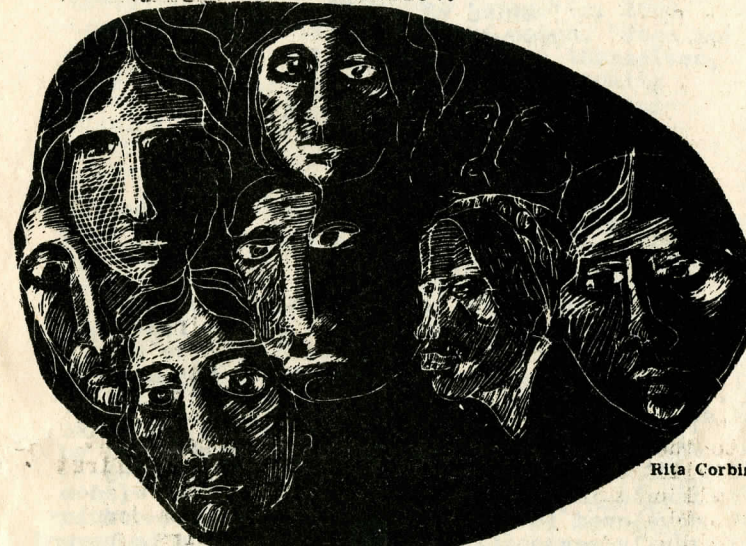
A theology of peace must consider the Last Judgement as well as the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus the Suffering Servant

The Catholic Theology of Peace has a third dimension—a dimension beyond the peace witness of the historic "peace churches and of traditional "Sermon on the Mount" pacifism, namely that of the Eucharistic Feast. Catholics, by this meal, enter a holy communion through the central act of Catholic worship. They become one with Jesus and with each other.

At the Eucharistic meal (the meal of the thanksgiving) we eat the bread that Jesus left us saying, "The bread that I will give you is My flesh for the life of the world." This is the bread that was left as a legacy to all His followers on the day before He died the death of the "suffering servant." To the end, He loved His enemies and asked forgiveness for those who tortured and legally executed Him. By His innocent suffering, Jesus reconciled people to God and to each other, and He gave those to come the same task of reconciliation and the same nonviolent means, loving acceptance of self-suffering.

The Eucharistic Community would be expected to be the reconciling community of humanity. Women peacemakers may help it to assume the reconciling witness which will only begin to grow strong as we unlearn the "just war" application to human conflict.



Rita Corbin

Women in the Gospel

Women as witnesses for peace will be plumbing the depths of the implications of the Sermon on the Mount, of the Last Judgement parable, of the Eucharistic meal, and of the sense of being a community of the Resurrection. The message of loving the enemy whoever and however lethal he or she may seem, is still as scandalous a message as it was when first pronounced by Jesus. It is surely the work of the "new creature" of the Gospel. For those who are mired in material concerns, it is total madness. It only comes clear when the power and grace of God are recognized as, in the end, irresistible forces in the human economy; when the Christians, by countering hatred with love, allows the grace of God to operate within him or her and within the adversary—the adversary being given the chance to see love in action rather than resistance in kind.

Women as witnesses for peace will only be fulfilling the role of witness that Jesus gave them in a society that did not recognize that a woman could be a witness. Jesus broke in a revolutionary way with the tradition of that society by making a woman the first witness of His messiahship. He first announced unequivocally the fact that He was the promised Messiah to the Samaritan woman at the well, certainly an unlikely witness. She belonged to a heretic sect, the Samaritans, and she was living a far from exemplary life. Starting with the concrete, the need for water, Jesus open-

ed up to her the reality of living water. When she stated her belief that a Messiah would come into the world who would tell all things, Jesus said simply, "I am He who is speaking with thee."

As Rachel Conrad Wahlberg points out in Jesus According to Women, "the Samaritan woman's response to Jesus is a sense of mission resulting in action." And the people's response to her preaching is action. They not only come to hear Jesus, but "many believed."

Another example is Jesus' entrusting the greatest news, after the Incarnation, in the entire history of human race, the Resurrection, to women. On the first day of the week, after the crucifixion, Jesus met Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, as they were running to tell the disciples the message of the angel about the Risen Lord. Jesus Himself commissioned them to "Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee and there they will see me." This is Mark's account. In John's account, Jesus asks Mary Magdalene not to touch Him for He has not yet ascended to His Father, and then gives the message: "But go to my brethren and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God."

One of the suggestions to the Universal Church during the Holy Year was that a theology of women should be developed. The proposal came from the Rev. Jean Galot, who stated in Civiltà Cattolica, a Jesuit Review published in Rome: "People ought to be speaking about the necessity of a theology of women if theology wants to be faithful to its goal of studying the divine plan of salvation in its human realization."

Theologizing by male theologians, with women serving as the passive "objects", is exactly what is not needed.

Many of us would counter that more to the point would be the urgent need of theology by women, with its authors admitted to every level of church gathering, up to Synods and Councils. After all, Jesus clearly opened the scriptures to His women followers, and chided Martha when she wanted Mary to stop absorbing His message and attend to household tasks.

It is of interest that during this Holy Year of Reconciliation and International Women's Year, a woman is one of the nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize, namely Mother Teresa of Calcutta. To her, Jesus is not an abstract concept, He is before her in the concrete, in the man or woman covered with maggots and dying in the gutter. Whether or not the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to her, her nomination is evidence that the works of mercy are being recognized as works of peace, reconciling person to person. Here is where the task of the peacemaker lies—in constant works of peace, and refusing, and teaching refusal, of their opposite, the works of war.

Man-made theology and man-made weapons threaten the future of the human family; they have indeed brought humanity to an obvious dead end. Jesus, who entrusted the good news that He was the redeemer of humankind to a woman, and who entrusted women with the news of His Resurrection, may yet use women to be witnesses to His message of peace. Will any Church structure oppose such a witness?

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October/November, 1978

WOMEN and the CHURCH

by Carol and Larry Holben

Ask any typical liberal with most of the right instincts about feminism: "What is the relationship between Christianity or the Bible to women's struggles for liberation?" The answer will probably be predictable. Christianity, like the Judaism from which it grew, is a male-dominated religion that uses divine sanction to perpetrate a continuing exploitation and oppression of females. As such, it is one of the prime villains in the feminist historical drama.

Isn't it obvious? Male priests, male preachers, male deity, pious homilies on wifely submission and the woman's "place." Any wonder that when Norman Lear wanted ultimate expressions of male chauvinist piggery for an "All in the Family" episode several years ago he quoted a Jewish prayer ("I thank you, God, that I was not born a woman.") and Saint Paul?

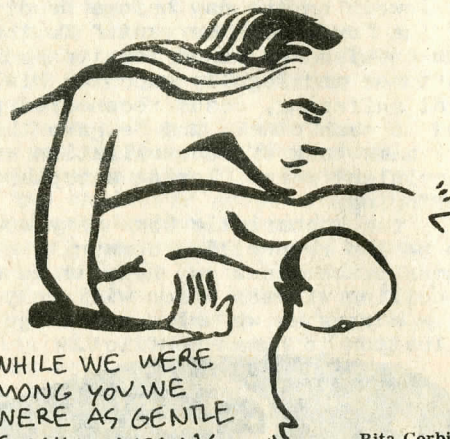
A quick survey of conservative Christian piety, Protestant or Catholic, makes all this and more seem to be true. Billy Graham announces with a straight face that "...with all the new freedom Christ brought women, he did not free them from the home." The traditional Christian marriage ceremony (from the Anglican rite) has a woman promise to "love, honor and obey..." Million-selling author Maribell Morgan instructs Christian women in the niceties of fulfilling their God-given (subordinate) role through everything from pretended baby-doll helplessness to sex in cellophane under the dining room table. And generations of Catholics have grown up accustomed to male priests, male assistants, altar boys and not a single woman past the communion rail (except on cleaning days, when they may perform the "feminine" job of changing the tabernacle cloth) as if the mere hint of a vagina anywhere in the sanctuary might taint the robust masculine purity of the sacramental mystery. To be sure, Vatican II has given us female readers and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, but not much more.

So, is the common assumption true? Is Christianity basically anti-female, a tool of repression to be cast off or at least dramatically re-cast in order for women in this day to discover all they can be? Is it at best an irrelevancy, at worst the enemy?

It might seem so, but we are convinced that a real understanding of the Christian gospel (freed from the skein of distortions that have perverted it over the centuries in the cause of male domination) and, even more fundamentally, an honest understanding of the teaching and action of Jesus about and toward women reveals the gospel as potentially the most liberating force possible not only for women (from their oppression) but for men as well (from the repressive mind-set that destroys their own full personhood in denying it to the other half of the race).

A wealth of support for a "liberated" (and liberating) God can be traced throughout the Biblical and early church teachings, with roots as deep as the Old Testament prophets (despite the patriarchal world in which they lived and spoke for God).

Incredible as it might seem to some, the Bible does not describe God in exclusively male images. Certainly, there are the father references, but there are also a number of times that God is likened to a woman, to a mother in particular. In Isaiah, God says, "I will cry out like a woman in travail..." and again



"WHILE WE WERE
AMONG YOU WE
WERE AS GENTLE
AS ANY NURSING
MOTHER FONDLING
HER LITTLE ONES."
- 1 THESS 2:7

Rita Corbin

"Hearken to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb." And while God is often remembered as the loving father welcoming home the prodigal son, or the shepherd risking all to find the one lost sheep, our God should also be recalled as the woman who swept out her entire house in search of one precious coin (Luke 15: 8-10), or the mother hen longing to hide Jerusalem under her wings (Matt. 23:37).

Of particular importance when discussing female images of God is the concept of Wisdom developed in the Old Testament, Wisdom consistently personified as a female. ("She is beyond the price of pearls, nothing you could covet is her equal...She is the tree of life for those who hold her fast, those who cling to her have happy days." Proverbs 3:15-18) In Proverbs 8 and 9, Wisdom reveals her origin as created before all other creatures, her active part in creation, and her purpose among men in leading them to God. But the theology of female wisdom comes to a dramatic climax when all of her attributes are incorporated into the description of the person of Christ. Jesus is referred to as Wisdom itself, the Wisdom of God (Matthew 11:19, Luke 11:49, I Corinthians 1:24-30). St. John, in the prologue to the fourth Gospel, links Wisdom to the Word which has been made flesh in the person of Christ. Thus a female image is used in describing the pre-incarnate Christ who is made incarnate through another female, Mary. Female images of God are not the only "forgotten" (ignored, suppressed?) elements of Christian tradition. It comes as a surprise to many that in the earliest Christian communities women were accepted on the same basis as men and shared with them in the full life of the new-born community of faith.

In the description of the first converts on the Day of Pentecost (a day in which both men and women waiting in the upper room received the Spirit), 3000 souls are numbered as accepting the message of Christ (Acts 2:41), not "so many men, not counting women and children" as would have been recorded in a Jewish account. As baptism became the sign and symbol of Christian faith, it was administered to both men and women, a radical departure from the male exclusivity of circumcision, the

Jewish rite to which baptism was frequently compared and contrasted.

The New Testament includes accounts of women in every role and position within the community of believers. Lydia is the first Christian convert in Europe; Philip's four daughters (and many other women) are praised as prophets; Priscilla with her husband, Aquila, is noted as a teacher; Phoebe is a deacon and a leader within her local church and the courier to Rome of one of Paul's most important letters; and Junia is referred to as an Apostle.

To the amazement of the culture around them, Christians rejected the male/female roles and stereotypes of their culture, seeing themselves as equal partners in Christian faith. As Tertullian, the early church father (c. 200) commented on Christian men and women, "Together they pray, together they prostrate themselves, together they perform their fast, mutually teaching, mutually exhorting, mutually sustaining. Equally are they both found in the church of God."

Saint Paul (of all people, see below) boldly sets the standard for this sort of life within the community of faith when he proclaims: "In Christ...there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female..." (Galatians 3:28). The church has managed to overcome the first two of these "distinctions"; why does it cling so desperately to the third?

For many on both sides of the feminist issue, the answer to that question lies in St. Paul's own writings. He is the one most often cited by conservatives arguing divine sanction for everything from male clergy to wifely "submission." Feminists, on the other hand, can wax positively vitriolic on the subject of Paul, casting him as an uptight, woman hating, authoritarian prig, and quite probably a closet homosexual in the bargain.

Both sides sacrifice complex truth for polemical points. Paul was a man of mighty contradictions, not the least of which was a struggle between his cultural/religious background as a first century Jew and his new, staggering vision of a whole new world order opened up by the life, death and resurrection of Christ. He was a Pharisee. He had been taught that it was better to burn the Torah than to waste its treasures on a woman's feeble mind. He had been raised with the certainty that the male was superior to the female ("I thank you God...") and yet now the Spirit was being poured out on the most amazing people... even Gentiles and women.

We must be willing to see Paul as a man "in process" from such a background to the glorious truth that in Christ, truly, the distinctions between male and female are broken down forever. Within that struggle, he would at times reflect perhaps more of what he was than what he would be.

We also need to recognize that often Paul has been made to sound more sexist than an honest reading of his original writings would suggest. Sometimes his very words are mis-translated--Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2) is referred to as a "servant" in the King James Version, even though the translators use the word "deacon" in other instances when the subject of the same Greek word is male. Sometimes distortions in emphasis color the Pauline message, as when ministers rant on wifely submission (Ephesians 5:21-33), neglecting to mention that the passage begins with instructions

for husbands and wives to submit to each other mutually. Sometimes simple ignorance of historical context leads to misunderstanding, as when Paul's instructions for women's silence in the church (I Corinthians 14:34,35) are applied to preaching and teaching, when the actual context suggests that casual chattering and questions about the sermon were the problems being addressed.

All the understanding in the world, however, will not totally remove the taint of chauvinism from Paul's epistles. His rabbinic roots are clearly evident in passages like I Timothy 2:12ff. where he insists that a woman must never teach a man. Fortunately, our faith as Christians is not based on St. Paul but on Jesus of Nazareth.

It is to his person and teaching that we must turn for a definitive understanding of what the gospel has to say about and to women. Because for the orthodox Christian, as we discover his attitude, we discover the mind of God.

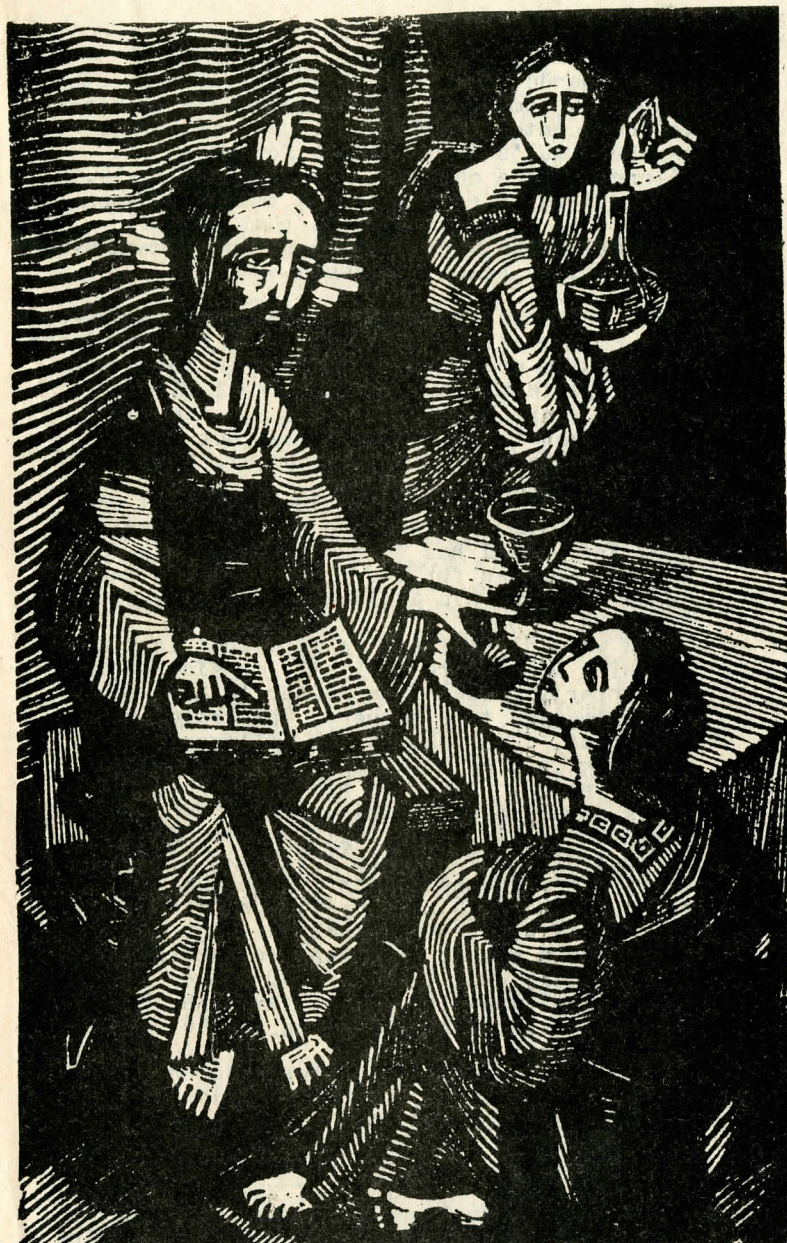
And what do we find? We find that in a day in which women were basically considered to be property passed from father to husband and relegated to a screened "backroom" of the synagogue, Jesus shocks his followers by treating them as intelligent, responsible human beings. Never in his teaching does Jesus advocate a "feminine role." He counts women among his close followers and depends on their financial support for his ministry. He always addresses women in the same straightforward manner as men, drawing no distinctions. The rabbis might teach that theology was wasted on a woman, but when the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:5-30) poses a theological question he replies with the essence of Christian teaching on the nature of worship.

Jesus also repeatedly allowed women to touch him in public, nothing particularly radical to the modern mind, but scandalous to a religious Jew. The Law proclaimed women ritually impure (because of their monthly periods) nearly a quarter of the time and taught that ritual uncleanness would be transmitted to any male they touched, denying him temple privileges until certain ceremonies were fulfilled. Religious Jews (especially Pharisees) would not even allow women to count change into their palms for fear of contamination. But Jesus gratefully accepts a woman (a notorious sinner at that) who pours balm on his feet and dries them with her hair. He allows a sick woman (who has had a continuous menstrual flow which rendered her a social outcast for years) to touch his cloak and receive healing.

At the climactic points of Christ's ministry it is women, not men, who stand by him and who first experience his triumph. The apostles scatter in terror, while women follow him to the cross. The first to be told of the resurrection are women and the first to see the risen Christ is a woman, Mary Magdalen. As well, the first believers told to proclaim the good news of the resurrection are women, not men.

If all this were not enough, we have recorded an incident in which Jesus specifically denounces the sexual role stereotyping of his day (and ours).

In Luke 10:38-42 we have the story of a visit by Jesus and his band to the home of



Iazarus, Mary and Martha in Bethany, just outside Jerusalem. While Jesus teaches, Martha scurries around the kitchen, doing "women's work." Her sister, Mary, presumes to sit among the men at Jesus' feet and listen to this teaching. (Remember contemporary attitudes toward women and the Torah to realize what an outrageous step this was.) Martha finally asks Jesus to tell her sister to help her, to send her "back to the kitchen" where she belongs. What does Christ do? He instead congratulates Mary on her choice and gently tells Martha that there are more important things for her than "women's work." This simple story sends two thousand years of male preachment about a woman's "place" smashing into rubble.

For Catholic Christians especially, one other image of the female remains: Mary, the mother of Jesus. For all that sentimental piety and latent paganism may have done to misdirect or

deform the force of her life and example, Mary remains important not as some semi-divine personage outside human experience, not as a cosmic bosom, but rather, most powerfully, as the ultimate model of what a disciple is called to be, male or female. God calls, she responds--without qualification, without hesitation, without regard for her own rights or desires. She has become what every one of us must become: a servant.

And as servants, we stand together; we are called to live and serve together, looking not to our own advantage (or, in hip modern terminology, not "looking out for number one") but to the needs of a broken, unjust world around us. In that call to sacrificial discipleship, the gospel offers a radical hope beyond simple male-female parity, beyond the hard-won equality of natural rivals. It offers a call and a demand for life-giving and mutually sustaining cooperation in self-emptying love.

Yet in the face of this, the awkward truth must be faced: whatever the witness of Jesus' ministry, whatever the life of the early community of faithful followers, whatever the call of discipleship, the churches and the men of the churches have turned their backs on the truth. Worse, they have twisted the truth to untruth and baptized the oppressive hierarchies and power-plays of a dying world in order to preserve their own dominance.

Repentance is in order. It is not enough to grudgingly give in on this or that symbolic level and hope that will do--to ordain here, to hold a trendy conference there. A basic truth for the individual Christian and for Christian churches alike is that real healing and growth come only after honest admission of sin. Christian men and the Christian churches must openly confess and repent of their deliberate distortions of Christ's message in service of their own advantage.

Just as the church has allowed itself to pimp for the world in economics, nationalism and militarism, just as it has denied Christ's teaching on rich and poor, on violence and war, on the claims of the state and the claims of God, so the churches have sold out the radical truth of Christ's liberating message to women.

But repentance is only the beginning. Out of repentance must grow the gospel style of self-giving, self abandoning love and responsibility between and from all who claim to partake of the new kingdom of life--man to woman, woman to man, woman to woman, man to man. Out of it must grow the beginnings of what the earliest believers meant when they called each other sister and brother.

The model is Jesus, giving up himself for the redemption of the world. The model is Mary, giving up herself for the purposes of God. Servanthood is not restricted to the feminine gender--it is the basic mark of the follower of the incarnate God. To be the grateful servant, male or female--to renounce privilege and force, to let go of ego props and the safety nets of "place" and "role"--opens us to freedom and to responsibility beyond our wildest dreams and deepest fears. What can be more exhilarating, more terrifying than to become everything we're meant to be?

Reprinted from The Catholic Agitator.

Confession of a Sexist

by Frank Cordaro

The first time I realized that my being a sexist hurt someone was in my first year of graduate school. I was in the formation group for diocesan seminarians. We had two women in our group. We were just beginning our second semester weekend retreat when at our first session I said "I hope the women will do most of the cooking because we guys don't know what we are doing." An upperclassman said to me, "Frank, stop that bullshit about women." Everyone became silent. I looked at Ann and she looked at me. She started to cry and so did I. She was hurt and I hurt her. I hurt another person. I hurt a woman, apparently for no other reason except that she was a woman. The first thing that I desperately wanted to say for myself and to the others was that there are women in my life and that they love me and I love them. I did not hate women. But why was Ann crying and why did I hurt her? We had a reconciliation but I was numb for the rest of the weekend. It was the first time that I felt so deeply my personal ability to hurt another person solely because she was a woman.

I was very much a sexist then. I didn't fundamentally choose to be a sexist. It was in the air that I breathed. I grew up in an Italian-American family. I had four brothers and one older sister. My father was a coach at an all boys Catholic high school. My whole life surrounded sports and my family. The traditional sex roles were a given. I can't remember the sex roles ever seriously being questioned by anyone I knew personally, both female and male. Of course, at that time I was never looking for it. In my family, my mother and father loved each other very much and their love affected all of us children in a good way. My father, a traditional male, could show gentle and caring emotions at important times. My mother, a traditional female, could show strength and make decisions when needed. Their love for each other and

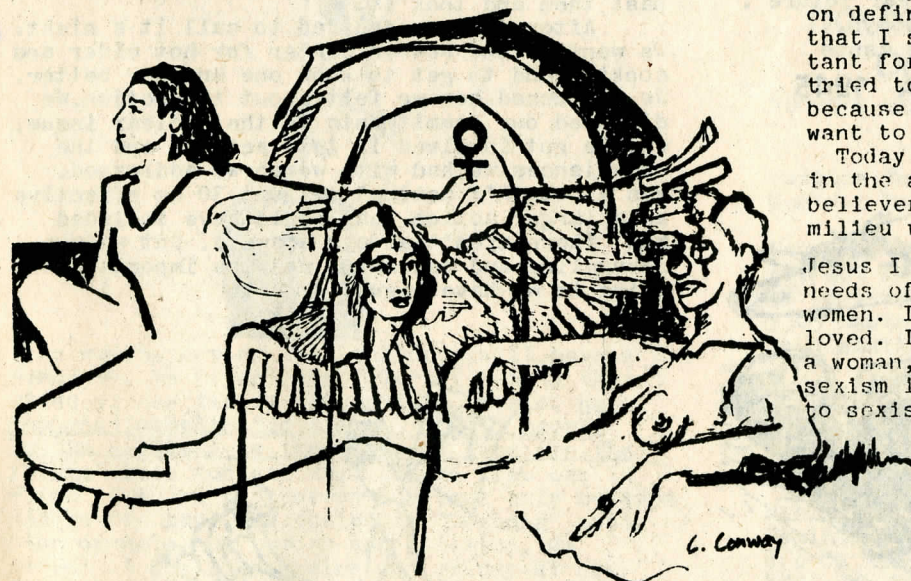
their true and deep faith in Jesus helped develop that same faith in us, their children. We grew up with an unquestionable love for ourselves. The self love that only comes about when a person believes that s/he is truly loved. Looking back on my years of growing up, these core elements of love and faith gleamed through every aspect of my life; the good things and the bad things.

Sexism, like slavery, has its own time for becoming a conscious evil in society. Like racism, it is going to take a long time for society to eradicate this injustice. But we as individuals need not wait, especially we believers in Jesus. Prejudices like sexism and racism are allowed to control individuals only when they feel the need to protect or defend something about themselves that they are not sure of. White racists see a black person as being inferior to themselves only because these white people are not totally sure of their own worth. They need to exalt themselves at the expense of all blacks regardless of the individual black person. A sexist male sees a woman as having defined and subordinate roles only because he is not sure of his own mixed feelings about his identity. The woman's defined and subordinate roles allow him to be defined without ever really dealing with his true feelings and needs. Sexism is a "cover up" at the expense of women.

The believer in Jesus need not "cover up." True faith recognizes the complete love of God for all persons, especially for the believers themselves. When I saw that I hurt Ann, my first instinct was to make a personal inventory of my own self worth--yes, I do know women and yes they do love me as I love them. I am loved. So, also I want to love. What the older seminarian wanted me to do was to stop talking about women and men in traditional sex roles. What he was asking me to give up was not constituent to my personal sense of identity. My self worth was not dependent on defined women's roles. The sexist language that I so unconsciously used was not important for my personal worth. At that time I tried to stop talking in sexist terms because I knew I hurt Ann and I didn't want to hurt her.

Today I am sometimes still a sexist, it's in the air I breathe, but I am also a believer. I don't have to let the sexist milieu run my life. As a believer in

Jesus I must remain open to respond to the needs of my fellow persons and that means women. If they are hurting, they need to be loved. If I am hurting a woman because she is a woman, I need to stop it. I can stop sexism in myself and I can be a countersign to sexism in the larger society.



Women

by Jacquee Dickey

At the National Mobilization for Survival National Conference in September, it became clear that more womyn were needed in the MOB. There was a need for womyn to see disarmament as their issue; a need for bringing feminist analysis to peace-making, a need to explore connections as did the womyn of long ago-between militarism and sexism.

A group of womyn from Iowa and Nebraska got together and decided to begin.

Rosalyn Carter was coming to Iowa on September 29 to campaign for the Democrats.

She would arrive in Des Moines and make stops at several locations and then go on to Ames that evening to speak at the 30 a plate Democratic dinner.

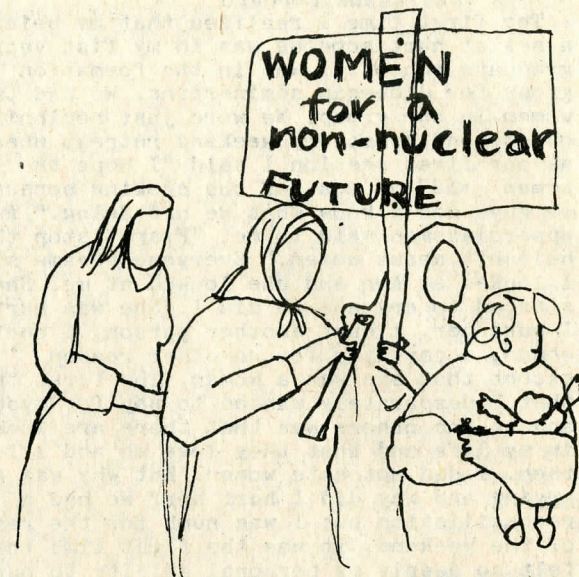
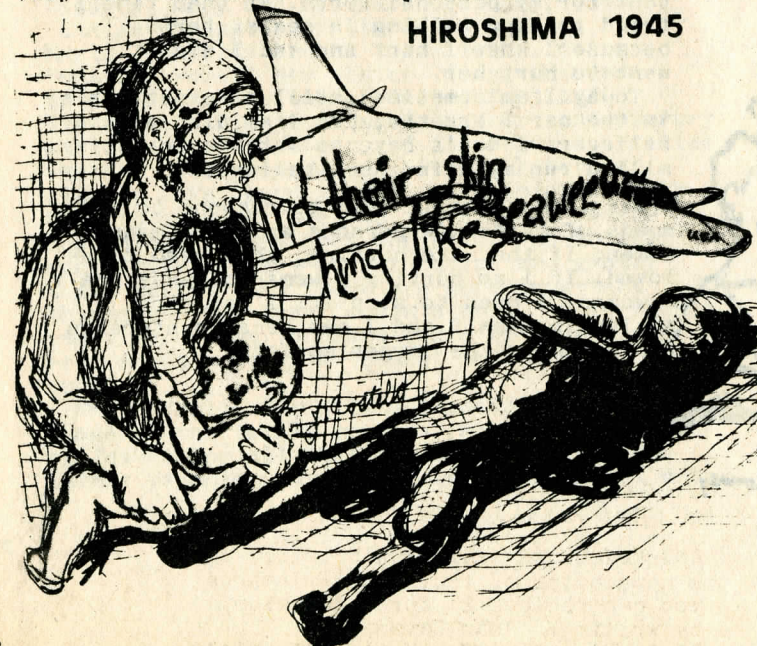
We decided to draft an "open letter" to Rosalyn Carter which we would also use to leaflet with. Our hope was to somehow get a copy of it to Rosalyn Carter.

Friday afternoon it rained but it did not dampen the spirits of the fifteen womyn that awaited Mrs. Carter's arrival at the AMF plant. Everyone had a sign with the goals of the Mobilization: "Ban nuclear power, ban nuclear weapons, end the arms race, and meet human needs". Two womyn held a six-foot banner reading "Women for a Non-Nuclear Future". As the limousine arrived, we began chanting "Stop the arms race". A tiny figure bent over to read our signs from the car window as she smiled and waved. Rosalyn Carter then got out and hurried into the plant. One woman from our group then went over to the limousine driver to give him a leaflet to pass to Mrs. Carter.

That evening in Ames 30 womyn from Nebraska and several cities in Iowa arrived at the Hilton Coliseum. A spectre of death loomed near a child's coffin to dramatize the threat of nuclear technology. Boxes filled with ashes were passed out with this note attached: "In these ashes we remember the death of women, children, and other innocent civilians of Hiroshima-Nagasaki. They were the first victims of the nuclear age. We could be tomorrow's. Support a non-nuclear future".

Some womyn chose only to leaflet womyn. They felt this more directly leaflet the issue

HIROSHIMA 1945



of disarmament to the attention of womyn. Most womyn seemed eager to take a leaflet aimed especially for them. Some men were annoyed, some amused at not receiving one.

As the time approached for Mrs. Carter to speak at the dinner we moved over to the anticipated arrival entrance. Just as we arrived at the sidewalk, she began to come down the walk preceded by Secret Service agents who kicked everything in their path out of the way--including my knee. We stood silently under street lights with signs hoping for her recognition. One gregarious woman in our group was very quick to notice Rosalyn passing by and held out a leaflet and called upon her to take it. The Secret Service agents discouraged this of course, but Rosalyn pushed past them and took it.

After that we decided to call it a night. We went to the Newman Center for hot cider and cookies and to get to know one another better. We discussed how we felt about the action. We discussed our commitments to the nuclear issue, why we got involved in this action, and the experiences we had with women we addressed. Was a "women's action" of just 30 as effective as a larger action that would have included men? There aren't always answers. But we are struggling and searching and the important thing is we have begun.



via pacis

Mobilizing for Survival

AN OPEN LETTER TO ROSALYN CARTER

Dear Rosalyn Carter,

You have said that you want "to build a more caring society." (U.S. News, Nov. 1977) We are a group of women from the Midwest who share your concern and ask you to measure and attack the worst obstacles to such a nurturing society.

We as women must accept responsibility for a peaceful world and dispel the myth that having the atom means safety.

Consider how doggedly we march in the wrong direction. A single nuclear explosion can be a disaster and three such explosions a world catastrophe. Yet we continue to build three new nuclear warheads every day to add to our 30,000. (The Defense Monitor) The Pentagon controls land equal to six small states and wealth greater than 15 large manufacturing companies (Sidney Lens, Day Before Doomsday). We are selling arms and providing paramilitary training for 48 repressive dictatorships including Nicaragua, the Philippines and Iran (Rep. Ronald Dellums). The total power of all bombs used in all wars to date is under 20 megatons. Now we have single bombs of 20 megaton force (Rocky Flats Action Group).

Meanwhile people are hungry. Nearly 520 million people in the world, many of them children, are sick from undernourishment. People need jobs. War production is one of the least effective ways of maintaining employment. We have inner cities to rebuild, railroads to restore and solar energy to develop. The future of humankind is being threatened by the accumulation of radioactive nuclear waste with no disposal site available after two decades of research. Our country is first in war spending but 13th in teacher/pupil ratio, 17th in doctor/patient ratio, and 18th in life expectancy. Thus it is clear that the real needs of people are not being met.



As women, hoping that children will have a tomorrow, we reject the illusory safety that rides at the tip of the nuclear missile. How can vast complicated plans to kill people by the millions be the basis of hope for the future? This society must change from one in which some are prosperous and smug only because others are poor and desperate. "Defense" must stop dragging us toward annihilation. We marvel at how life begins and cringe at how it could end.

As far back as 1915 the Women's Peace Party made clear the connection between the military and male dominance with this statement: "As

women, we feel a peculiar moral passion of revolt against both the cruelty and waste of war. We will no longer consent to its destruction. We demand that women be given a share in the deciding between war and peace." And still today the arms race underscores the horrible fact that women are equal in death, but not in the power and means to choose life. LET US ALL NOW CHOOSE LIFE.

Mobilization for Survival, Women's Taskforce
c/o Catholic Worker House, 713 Indiana Avenue,
Des Moines, Iowa



MOTHER JONES

Drawing by Connie Chiara

no matter what your fight
don't be ladylike (1915)

WOMEN'S RESOURCES ON JUSTICE AND PEACE ISSUES:

Justice for Women in the Church
Contact Mary Ann Foy at 255-5711

Movement for a New Society Feminists
put out a fine womyn's newsletter,
to receive it write: BREWINGS
3505 Hawthorne Omaha, NB 68131
Send small donation if you can.

Women's International League for
Peace and Freedom
Contact Maggie Rawland at 276-5758
8200 Prairie Des Moines

Mobilization for Survival
Feminist task force
c/o Catholic Worker Box
4551 Des Moines 243-0765

AND HOW DO WE BEGIN AGAIN . . .
a newsletter of feminist resistance
you can receive it for a donation
by writing: Joan Cavanagh
32 Stevens St. New Haven, CT 06519

multinationals in the philippines



(Recently the Feminist Task Force for the Mobilization for Survival sponsored a talk at the Catholic Worker House by two women from the Philippines. These women work with peasants who have been displaced by multi-national corporations, most specifically the banana plantations of Del Monte, United Brands (Chiquita) and Castle and Cooke (Dole). The following article was written based on the information they shared.)

This is a story about bananas. Those bananas we eat on our cereal or bake into cream pies or put into school lunch boxes or eat on a midnight snack raid. If you look closely you'll see a sticker on them that says either "Dole," "Del Monte," or "Chiquita." The world's banana industry is controlled by these U.S. companies. So, you say, what does that mean to us?

It is scary to see, especially in Iowa, an agricultural state, how alienated we are all becoming to food production. We don't ask questions about where our food comes from. It is becoming more common to see that the supper on a rural farmer's table came from the work of some corporate food conglomerate rather than the work of the farmer's own hands. As for the banana, it is one of many foods that are controlled on the market by multi-



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national corporations. Let's trace it to the Philippines, one of the many countries the crops are grown in.

The Philippines are blessed with more than 200 varieties of bananas that grow naturally and abundantly. But the bananas exported are a special variety that was planted by these corporations to meet foreign demands and tastes--and corporate profits. Fifty-six thousand acres of Mindanao's choicest plains were gradually taken over by corporations to be used for their banana crops. These lands had been previously used to grow food for local consumption. Peasants were displaced from their land. Wealthy lowlanders who were mostly businessmen came and took the lands of the natives in exchange for a few canned goods and cigarettes. One of these lowlanders was said to have gotten more than 500 acres of cultivated land.

One peasant explained what happened in this fashion: "We had worked on the land for a long time. We had taught our children how to plant crops. But this man came, claiming that the land was his. We could not believe it. When we went to the bureau of land to ask why, they told us that our land belonged to this stranger because he had the papers to prove it and we had none. We could not do anything."

This was how the landlords came and how the peasants became tenants. The tenants worked, but did not own the land. They were given a share of 1/3 of every harvest. This was how it was until the late 1960's, when the banana plantations were first developed.

The peasant continues: "One day, government officials with some Americans came to appraise our land. And they told us: we are putting up a banana plantation here. This plantation will surely improve your lives. You will have jobs, instead of just idling around. And every month you will get a regular salary. We will also put up roads here, build a school and a hospital. Then, it will be easy for you. These bananas will be exported to foreign countries like Japan, and this will help our economy. These American businessmen are kind enough to invest in your area. We should not disappoint them. At first we simply could not understand what they wanted. Give up our lands? How could we give up our lands when it was our only source of livelihood?"

The landlords were the first to give up. They were given a substantial cash advance by the company. The tenants were left with no choice but to abide by the landlord's decisions.

Lands were leased for approximately \$11-33 per acre, for ten years. Some of the tenants were given \$13 as consolation for their crops, but most got nothing.

"It was less than three weeks after the eviction notice that they bulldozed our land. I had to leave then," continues a tenant. "I could not stand the sight of coconut trees falling one after the other."

What happened to the tribal Filipinos was even worse. All their efforts, all their lands were exchanged for a few canned goods and cigarettes. Now they have retreated deeper into the mountains. Like the tenants, they had no papers to show that the land was theirs. But the tradition had always held that the land belonged to whoever tilled the soil.

The company used other means to acquire the land, not only in Buenavida, but in many parts of Mindanao. First they used government officials to appraise the land and talk to the peasants. Then they offered cash advances which later on became the farmers' debts as they were charged an interest of 14% compounded quarterly. The contract itself was written in English which the farmers could hardly understand.

In cases where the farmers resisted, the military intervened. In Delta farms, one of the Del Monte plantations, four workers were killed in November 1976 because they refused to give up their small piece of land which the company wanted. Close to 700 families were



October/November, 1978

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easily ejected by United Brands in August, 1977 to make way for the company's expansion program.

It is said that the Philippine Constabulary, the army and the Provincial Commander were present when the residents were ejected. The people report that even the army of PANAMIN, the government agency in charge of cultural minorities was there. In less than two weeks, the people left out of fear. There was no relocation site prepared for them. Some families were simply deposited in the streets of the nearby town of Carmen by the demolition team. Others who had nowhere to go became workers of the corporate banana farms--hired laborers on lands once their own.

Even today, more lands are being occupied by corporations engaged in the highly profitable business of agricultural production for export. Meanwhile, the small farmers, the tenants and the tribal Filipinos are being phased out of their lands and deprived of their livelihood.

Once on the plantations, Filipinos encounter horrendous working conditions. In one family, all members are obliged to work, the eldest to the 13-year-old child. A family member gives this account: "It is true, we were given a job by the company, in exchange for our time and our strength. But the hours are long. Work starts at 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning. Sometimes we are obliged to work even on Sundays. I think they care more for bananas than for us. Every day we have to carefully prune the plants and take off the dead leaves, rain or shine. I am a bagger. In one day I have to bag 200 bunches. Many baggers have quit work because they got sick, usually of lung ailments. The bags we use are treated with a very strong chemical. Many of us have contracted skin allergy because of the aerial spraying. Maybe I've already gotten used to this. According to the supervisors, there is nothing to fear, but when the spraying starts, they run to the nearest building for shelter."

Unions are too much of a threat to the workers, so they must live with these inhuman working conditions. The lands that the people once used to make a livelihood are also being exploited with too much fertilizer, chemicals and insecticides.

It has become clear that the multinationals value profit over human life. They are proliferating their exploitation into third and fourth world countries. Fewer and fewer are controlling the world market as multinationals are buying up smaller companies into their fold. And we in the U.S. are consuming the products they unjustly produce at the expense of the innocent lives of our sisters and brothers on the other side of the world. We must start questioning the ethics of the producers of the goods we buy. In the name of Christian justice, we must start saying "no" to corporate control.



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